

reformers who are speaking out against extremism and in favor of liberty. We must continue transforming our Armed Forces so that the next generation inherits a military that is capable of keeping the American people safe and advancing the cause of peace. And above all, we must always ensure that our troops have the funds and resources they need to do their jobs and that their families receive the full support they deserve.

I have great confidence in the future because I have confidence in you all. Ultimately, the security of our Nation depends on the courage of those who wear the uniform. I see that courage in all of you. I thank you for your patriotism. I thank you for your devotion to duty. May God bless you in all your endeavors. May God bless your families, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:25 a.m. in Eisenhower Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. Franklin L. Hagenbeck, USA, superintendent, U.S. Military Academy at West Point, who introduced the President, and his wife Judy; Brig. Gen. Michael S. Linnington, USA, commandant, U.S. Military Academy at West Point; Brig. Gen. Patrick Finnegan, USA, dean, U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and his wife Joan; and Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commander, U.S. Central Command. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

### **Statement on the Situation in Zimbabwe**

*December 9, 2008*

As my administration has made clear, it is time for Robert Mugabe to go. Across the continent, African voices are bravely speaking out to say now is the time for him to step down. These leaders share the desire of ordinary Zimbabweans for a return to peace, democracy, and prosperity. We urge others from the region to step up and join the growing chorus of voices calling for an end to Mugabe's tyranny.

The United States will continue to work with our partners around the world to halt the violence and stem the humanitarian disaster that the Mugabe regime is inflicting on its people. We stand ready to help rebuild

Zimbabwe once a legitimate government has been formed that reflects the results of the March elections.

### **Executive Order 13481—Providing an Order of Succession Within the Department of Justice**

*December 9, 2008*

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998, 5 U.S.C. 3345 *et seq.*, it is hereby ordered that:

**Section 1.** Subject to the provisions of section 2 of this order, the following officers, in the order listed, shall act as and perform the functions and duties of the office of Attorney General, during any period in which the Attorney General, the Deputy Attorney General, the Associate Attorney General, and the officers designated by the Attorney General pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 508 to act as Attorney General have died, resigned, or otherwise become unable to perform the functions and duties of the office of Attorney General, until such time as at least one of the officers mentioned above is able to perform the functions and duties of that office:

- (a) United States Attorney for the District of Maryland;
- (b) United States Attorney for the Southern District of Alabama; and
- (c) United States Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia.

**Sec. 2. Exceptions.** (a) No individual who is serving in an office listed in section 1 of this order in an acting capacity, by virtue of so serving, shall act as Attorney General pursuant to this order.

(b) No individual listed in section 1 shall act as Attorney General unless that individual is otherwise eligible to so serve under the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998.

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of this order, the President retains discretion, to the extent permitted by law, to depart from this order in designating an acting Attorney General.